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## **MODERN PSYOPS: COMMUNICATIVE PATHOGENICITY STRUCTURE**

The scientific article, aimed at isolating the communicative structure of PSYOPS in order to develop further mechanisms for countering their negative effect, general phenomena of PSYOPS being the article's object, and its communicative structure in its linguistic vector being the article's subject, and its communicative structure in its linguistic vector being the article's subject, deals with eliciting the communicative structure of modern informational-psychological operations (PSYOPS) in view of their axis of suggestiveness and pathogenicity. Since the main goal of PSYOPS, which is to support or change the addressee's particular preferences, involves distortion of objective reality as its fundamental feature, great attention, especially under the conditions of the current socio-political situation in Ukraine, is drawn to not only the issue of systematizing the PSYOPS as an extremely powerful phenomenon of the state's modern information space, but also the problem of formulating strategies and tactics to counteract the negative influence produced by pathogenic texts within the framework of PSYOPS. Developing such mechanisms for counteracting the negative effect of PSYOPS is possible only under the condition of adamantly defining the linguistic influential structure of PSYOPS and qualifying their linguistic component itself as the dominant of the information destruction,

as well as determining its suggestive specificity, which will undoubtedly enable the identification of pathogenic arrays of such information and, thus, the possibility of reduction, neutralization or at least minimization of its consequences. On top of that, the author defines both the features of the classical directions of studying suggestion and the specifics of the latest creative sciences devoted to the analysis of influential discourses, also presenting the newest multidimensional and complex scientific direction of Spin-Suggestology, which is directed both onto the scientific study of suggestion, that is, communicative influence, and potential changes in the perception of certain influential discourses by the recipients, a certain semantic «spinning» of the influential discourse, its artificially created peculiar versatile, multifaceted actualization; and partly onto forming an algorithm for neutralizing the pathogenicity of PSYOPS megadiscourses as an inseparable complex of immanently suggestive verbal, non-verbal and extralinguistic indicators, as well as the ecologization and depathologization of the information space in the specified discursive segment, which undoubtedly is a particularly important aspect of the state's modern information policy in the conditions of hybrid wars and thus maximally visualizes perspective of the research.

**Key words:** PSYOPS, informational-psychological operations, communicative influence, suggestion, NLP, pathogenic texts, Spin-Suggestology, Suggestive Linguistics, Spin-Doctoring, communicative structure.

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## **СУЧАСНІ ІПСО: СТРУКТУРА КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ ПАТОГЕННОСТІ**

Наукову статтю, спрямовану на виокремлення комунікативної структури ІПСО з метою розробки подальших механізмів протидії їхньому негативному впливу, об'єктом якої є загальні феномени ІПСО, а предметом – їхня комунікативна структура в її мовному векторі, присвячено дефінуванню комунікативної структури сучасних інформаційно-психологічних операцій з огляду на властивий їм сугестивний та патогенний вектор. Оскільки основна мета ІПСО, що полягає в підтримці або зміні певних уподобань реципієнта, передбачає дисторцію, викривленість об'єктивної реальності як її фундаментальну ознаку, очевидно, що максимальний акцент, особливо за умов сучасної соціально-політичної ситуації, що склалася в Україні, фокусується не лише на вивченні питання систематизації ІПСО як вкрай потужного феномену сучасного інформаційного простору країни, а й на проблемі формулювання стратегій і тактик протидії негативному впливу, продукованому патогенними текстами в рамках

ІПСО. Формулювання таких механізмів протидії негативному ефекту ІПСО є можливим лише за умови чіткого визначення лінгвістичної впливової структури ІПСО та кваліфікації безпосередньо лінгвістичного її компонента як домінанти інформаційної деструкції, визначення її сугестійної специфіки, що, беззаперечно, уможливить ідентифікацію патогенних складників такої інформації і, таким чином, дасть змогу нейтралізувати чи бодай мінімізувати її руйнівні наслідки. Авторка статті також окреслює як особливості класичних напрямів вивчення сугестії, так і специфіку новітніх креативних наук, присвячених аналізу впливових дискурсів, і представляє новітній полівимірний та комплексний науковий напрям спін-сугестологію, скерований як загалом на наукове вивчення сугестії, тобто комунікативного впливу, і потенційну зміну сприйняття певних сугестогенних дискурсів реципієнтами, смислове «обертання» сугестогенного дискурсу, його штучно створену своєрідну різнобічну, різноаспектну актуалізацію; так і почасти на формування алгоритму нейтралізації патогенності мегадискурсів ІПСО як нерозривного комплексу внутрішньо сугестивних вербальних, невербальних та екстралінгвістично-ситуативних маркерів, а також екологізацію і депатологізацію інформаційного простору в зазначеному дискурсивному сегменті, що є особливо важливим аспектом сучасної інформаційної політики держави в умовах гібридних воєн і максимально унаочнює перспективність дослідження.

**Ключові слова:** ІПСО, інформаційно-психологічні операції, комунікативний вплив, сугестія, НЛП, патогенні тексти, спін-сугестологія, сугестивна лінгвістика, спін-докторинг, комунікативна структура.

**Problem statement and the latest scientific researches and publications analysis.** The modern netocratic society (see 6) is a society where data is the primary commodity that gives crucial importance to netocratic discourse, total suggestiveness and pathogenicity that characterizes this discourse as one that in any way harms or is capable of harming its recipient being one of its crucial features.

It is these suggestiveness and pathogenicity that extend to all types and types of conflict communication, but they obtain absolute importance precisely during war, an integral part of which is the information struggle, along with the conduct of traditional hostilities. Such a discourse is traditionally called PSYOPS or InfoOPS – information and psychological special operations, defined by the US Department of Defense as «planned political, economic, military and ideological activities directed at foreign countries, organizations and individuals with the aim of creating emotions, attitudes, understandings, beliefs and behavior favorable to achieving ... political and military goals» [13], emphasizing that they «transmit selected information and indicators to a foreign audience in order to influence its emotions, motives, objective reasoning and, ultimately, behavior» [13].

Analysis of recent research and publications

Traditionally, PSYOPS, as well as the phenomenon of information wars, are considered within the framework of the state security paradigm. The basic goals of PSYOPS are officially defined as «weakening the will of the target audience of the

adversary or potential adversary; strengthening the commitment of a friendly target audience; ensuring the support and cooperation of an uncommitted or undecided audience» [5], it is also emphasized that «the effectiveness of NATO PSYOPS operations can be improved if they support and are supported by other lines of operations, especially in the information environment» [5].

History and public administration expert Robert Longley notes that «typical PSYOPS tactics on the battlefield include: distributing pamphlets or leaflets encouraging the enemy to surrender and giving instructions on how to surrender safely; the visual «shock and awe» of a massive attack using a huge number of troops or technologically advanced weapons; indiscriminate use of snipers, mine traps and improvised explosive devices (IEDs); «false flag» events: attacks or operations designed to convince the enemy that they were carried out by other countries or groups, etc.» [12], emphasizing that «in all cases, the objective of psychological warfare on the battlefield is to destroy the enemy's morale, which prompts him to capitulate or desert» [12]. Officially, the PSYOPS special units' main missions are divided into:

- influence with information. Military Information Support Operations (MISO) missions involve sharing specific information to foreign audiences to influence the emotions, motives, reasoning, and behavior of foreign governments and citizens. This can include cyber warfare and advanced communication techniques across all forms of media.
- deliberate deception. Military deception missions use psychological warfare to deliberately mislead enemy forces during a combat situation.
- advising governments. Interagency and government support missions shape and influence foreign decision making and behaviors in support of the state's objectives.
- providing communications for rescue efforts. Civil Authorities Information Support (CAIS) missions aid civilian populations during disaster relief situations by sharing critical information to support the rescue effort [14].

In Ukrainian science (and, unfortunately, in practice, as well), the start of intense studying of PSYOPS concept is associated with the well-known events of 2014, with the invasion of Russian troops into the Ukrainian Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk, and later on – with the beginning of a full-scale invasion of the aggressor country into Ukraine on February 24, 2022. However, the actual military aggression was preceded by the so-called latent phase - the phase of «hidden penetration into the enemy's information field for the purpose of researching the environment, approbation of certain ideas and the potential effect of their application, as well as creating and consolidating of one's own information platforms for further aggression» [3, p. 240], and the optimal tool for achieving this goal was the so-called media viruses – «information carriers (events, scandals, rumors, activities of organizations and individuals) that carry veiled ideas and messages in a hidden form» [3, p. 240]. Such viruses include targeted ones (advertising, election slogans, artificially detonated «information bombs»); puller ones – those which

arise spontaneously and are instantly picked up, filled with a certain content aimed at solving certain tasks; spontaneous ones that are born and spread without a specific purpose, but if successful can be used to solve certain tasks; as well as the so-called tactics of media activism, i.e., the tactics of «partisan information warfare implemented by individual media activists or groups of such activists» [3, p. 241].

Today, the ability to counteract such aggression is gaining momentum, but this in no way removes the urgent need to develop the specified problem, to understand the entire spectrum of its signs, components, techniques, psychotechniques (which are pathogenic, manipulative in their nature) in order to provide maximum resistance to the aggressor and ensure the security of the Ukrainian state. However, it should be noted that, unfortunately, there are currently very few studies of PSYOPS, carried out with the involvement of the latest synthetic scientific directions, within which there would be a comprehensive approach to the analysis of their communicative phenomena (including the psychological, neurophysiological, social, linguistic parameters) which would consider an end-to-end influence of all interactives. To the list of such sciences, firstly, one should include Neurolinguistic Programming, Suggestive Linguistics, Profiling, Spin-Doctoring and others, which will form the theoretical basis of the research, including the newest direction of Spin-Suggestology, presented in the author's previous works, which is aimed at identifying, classifying and neutralizing or minimizing the negative impact of PSYOPS (see 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). It should also be noted that the criterion of most PSYOPS classifications is first of all based on their local or purely technical dominance, but the qualification of the actual linguistic component as the information destruction dominant, determining its suggestive specificity, which would enable the identification of pathogenic elements of such information, and thus possibility of reduction, neutralization or at least minimization of its consequences, is usually left out of the frame.

In this aspect, the approach proposed by the author in previous works (see 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) made it possible to significantly expand the existing classification of information wars, since Spin-Suggestology considers their in-depth, natural components, which primarily include the use of false, destructive information and mandatory suggestive effect. Appropriate identification is possible only at the level of synthesis of the latest research methods and methodologies, first of all – NLP (Meta- and Milton-model), Suggestive Linguistics, Spin-Doctoring and the Theory of Lies (P. Ekman) in the paradigm of Spin-Suggestology, since these sciences are those that study the suggestive, that is, the influential side of the existence of any information, where language can be considered purely suggestive.

In addition, the main goal of PSYOPS, which is to support or change the political preferences of the addressee, implies total distortion of the objective reality as its fundamental feature, therefore, of great importance, especially under the conditions of the current socio-political situation in Ukraine, is not only the issue of systemizing the PSYOPS as an extremely powerful phenomenon of the modern information space, but also the problem of formulating strategies and tactics for countering the negative influence

produced by pathogenic texts within its framework, which determines **the relevance** of this research **aimed** at isolating the communicative structure of PSYOPS in order to develop further mechanisms for countering their negative effect, general phenomena of PSYOPS being the article's **object**, and its communicative structure in its linguistic vector being the article's **subject**.

**Main research material presentation.** The researchers note that in order to solve these pressing issues, it is necessary to «create an effective system for maintaining the information security of the state as a tool for countering external informational influence ... This issue becomes especially relevant in the conditions of the rapid development of modern information technologies, which make it possible to use mass media and IT networks as one of the main elements of «hybrid wars» to exert targeted influence on the enemy's population and army, their own society and the world community» [4, p. 40]. It follows that in the situation that has developed in the information space not only of Ukraine, but also of many other countries of the world, the issue of neutralizing information threats and the consequences of both information wars in general and psychological and information operations partly, solving of which would make it possible to form the appropriate planning decisions in the field of state information security of Ukraine, and therefore – the environmentalization and optimization of the information space.

Also, one of the priorities of the country's development is the creation of structures responsible for information and psychological security, but forming these bodies is impossible without an appropriate scientific and operational basis, which is currently not developed due to the lack of comprehensive scientific research on the specified topic, which requires the development of not only the theoretical foundations of their functioning, but also the corresponding teaching and methodical aids, reference books, etc. Nevertheless, depathologizing the information space is one of the main goals of the proposed scientific direction of Spin-Suggestology, which will not only make it possible to implement the requirements specified in the relevant legislative acts (see 1), but also to lay the fundamental principles of counteraction to the pathogenic texts disseminated within the framework of PSYOPS.

The actual name of the scientific direction proposed – «Spin-Suggestology» – consists of two parts that explain its basic specificity: the «suggestology» part demonstrates the scientific direction's focus on studying suggestion, that is, communicative (verbal and non-verbal) influence, and the «spin» part defines orientation towards a potential change in the perception of certain suggestive discourses by their recipients, a certain semantic «rotation» of suggestive discourse, its artificially created peculiar versatile, multifaceted actualization, which is one of the main tasks of the specified scientific direction.

Therefore, Spin-Suggestology (SS) is aimed at forming an algorithm for neutralizing the pathogenicity of pathogenic megadiscourses as an inseparable complex of immanently suggestive verbal, non-verbal and extralinguistic indicators, as well as the environmentalization and depathologisation of the information space in the specified discursive segment.

The scientific novelty of Spin-Suggestology lies in the fact that within its framework:

- for the first time, the concept of PSYOPS was implemented on the linguistic level and a classification of the features of the implementation of suggestiveness within PSYOPS was proposed, which introduces the concept of PSYOPS to the humanitarian paradigm instead of a purely military and technical one;
- for the first time, a complex scientific apparatus was proposed for identifying the pathogenicity of PSYOPS and further neutralizing the corresponding negative effects, which will make it possible to optimize the country's information field;
- the systemic composition of specific language suggestogenes was expanded and their neurolinguistic nature explained.

As already mentioned, fighting the negative consequences of PSYOPS is impossible without prior identification of the pathogenicity of the specified arrays, as well as without highlighting their communicative structure, which will enable the definition of the specified influential components in the information space.

Thus, in the paradigm of Spin-Suggestology, it is proposed to divide the holistic phenomenon of PSYOPS into the following communicative components:

1. «Suggestive strategic narrative» (SSN), in contrast to the classical understanding of strategic narrative, interpreted as a certain basis of ideology, a macro-narrative, «an axial content element of all informational (including propaganda) activities of the state, the activity of all communicative capabilities of the state directed onto its promotion in targeted audiences (internal or external)» [2], within the framework of Spin-Suggestology, is understood as the quintessence of the PSYOPS campaign, which distinguishes it from others, the main content dominant of its entire information essence, which is intended to be conveyed to a potential audience all campaign activities are aimed at (e.g., «russians don't leave their own», «our grandfathers fought», «we can repeat», etc.).
2. Pathogenic text (PT), which is understood as a functionally and semantically ordered verbal-and-non-verbal-and-situational construct of a small volume, which contains a suggestive strategic narrative of a political or information campaign, acquiring a monologic form with addressee identification (e.g., slogans, programs, biographies, messages). Verbal indicators of PT pathogenicity are linguistic pathogenic constructs – clear verbal markers that can be identified within its framework through a metamodel analysis of the type of political slogan (e.g., «we are one people, we are together with russia», «the future will depend only on our people and we will respect any of their choices», etc.).
3. Pathogenic discourse (PD), which is interpreted as a verbally designed, functionally and semantically ordered medium-sized group of words or sentences together with non-verbal indicators, which, being a complete semantic unity, is a kind of platform for implementing and further transmitting a suggestive strategic narrative, already verbalized within the political text, but can take the form of dialogue and polylogue, with a known and clearly identified

addressee – the «face» of the PSYOPS or their colleagues (e.g., statements, interviews, speeches, addresses to the public, communication in programs and talk show). Verbal indicators of PD's pathogenicity are linguistic pathogenic patterns – repeated verbal markers that can be identified within the Milton-model and metaprogram analysis.

4. Pathogenic megadiscourse (PMd), which is defined as a verbally designed, functionally and semantically ordered large group of words or sentences in a complex with nonverbal, extralinguistic and situational indicators, which, being a complete semantic unity, is a kind of megaplatform, a megasystem for relaying political discourse and political text, taking the form of a monologue, dialogue and polylogue for the widest possible audience and is formally always presented not as a direct political text with a defined author, but functions without a known and clearly identified addressee (or with a fake one) (e.g., news stories, publications on the Internet, other mass media). Verbal indicators of the pathogenicity of PMd are linguistic pathogenic megapatterns – repeated semantic constructions that can be identified within its framework within the framework of Spin-Doctoring analysis, elemental NAP-structural analysis, typology of information wars and types of lies.

If the study of a potentially pathogenic political text, discourse, or megadiscourse does not involve a specific text, discourse, or megadiscourse, it is suggested to define the subject of the study as an «array» rather than a «text» to avoid terminological homonymy with the previously presented units, meaning a generalized functional and a semantically ordered set of elements, which, being a complete semantic unity, contains and broadcasts and/or relays a potentially pathogenic suggestive message for a certain group of individuals.

**Research findings and prospects for further research.** Therefore, the communicative structure of PSYOPS identified within the framework of the modern scientific direction of Spin-Suggestology and presented in this scientific research will enable a more detailed study of the PSYOPS phenomenon in the actual communicative sphere, which currently remains extremely underdeveloped both in the domestic and in the world scientific paradigm.

It has to be emphasized that in the case of forming an information base of all specific linguistic pathogenic constructs, characteristic of specific persons (addressees) of pathogenic arrays, it is possible not only to establish the authorship of a PD, but also to establish the truth / pathogenicity and further identification of the author of PMd, which, of course, will enable linguistic intensification-oriented developments in the field of information security of the country, and therefore will become the focus of our further scientific developments.

Developments in this field will make it possible not only to single out the dominant strategies of constructing the specified pathogenic arrays, but also the ways of countering each of the types of PSYOPS, which will serve not only in deepening the relevant provisions of NLP, Suggestive Linguistics and Psycholinguistics, but also in the possible



formation of appropriate planning decisions in the field of state information security of Ukraine, which is a particularly important aspect of the state's modern information policy in the conditions of hybrid wars and best illustrates the perspective of the study, having been aimed at tackling the issue of formulating strategies and tactics for counteracting the negative impact produced by pathogenic texts within the framework of PSYOPS.

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